

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 H-02 PA-03

PRS-01 USIA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 EB-11 OMB-01

TRSE-00 NIC-01 RSR-01 EUR-25 /119 W  
----- 065514

R 301443 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1512

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT JM

SUBJ: THE INVISIBLE OPPOSITION

REF: KINGSTON 624

1. SUMMARY. JLP HAS BEEN QUIETLY HOLDING UNPUBLICIZED POLITICAL MEETINGS IN THE RURAL AREAS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS. SHEARER APPEARS TO BE MORE ACTIVE THAN IS COMMONLY BELIEVED. END SUMMARY.

2. IN REFTTEL, WE SPECULATED ON THE ABSENCE OF HUGH SHEARER, FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, FROM THE IMPRESSIVE CEREMONIES ON THE RETIREMENT OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL, AND WE SUGGESTED THAT SHEARER IS RELUCTANT TO EXPOSE HIMSELF TO THE POSSIBILITY OF PUBLIC EMBARRASSMENT. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT SHEARER WAS OFF THE ISLAND AT THE TIME- AN UNDERSTANDABLE EXPLANATION FOR HIS ABSENCE FROM THE CEREMONY, BUT HARDLY A GOOD EXCUSE FOR ABSENTING HIMSELF FROM AN EVENT OF SUCH NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE. ON REFLECTION, IT APPEARS THAT SHEARER DELIBERATELY ABSENTED HIMSELF TO DEMONSTRATE HIS DISPLEASURE WITH SIR CLIFFORD FOR

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SEVERAL ACTIONS WHICH COULD BE CONSTRUED AS PARTISAN SUPPORT FOR THE NEW MANLEY GOVERNMENT. SPECIFICALLY, THE GOVERNOR GENERAL USED THE PNP CAMPAIGN SLOGAN, " BETTER MUST COME," IN HIS THRONE SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT LAST YEAR. HE HAS MADE OTHER PARTISAN GESTURES SINCE. SHEARER, WHO PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE NOMINATION OF SIR CLIFFORD IN 1962, MAY HAVE BEEN UNDERSTANDABLY ANNOYED AND CHOSE TO DISPLAY HIS DISPLEASURE BY BOYCOTTING THE GRAND CEREMONIES.

3. IN REFTTEL, THE EMBASSY ALSO COMMENTED THAT SHEARER HAD NOT BEEN SEEN IN PUBLIC FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME. THE EMBASSY HAS SINCE LEARNED, HOWEVER, THAT THE JLP AND BITU HAVE BEEN QUIETLY CONDUCTING PUBLIC RALLIES IN RURAL JAMAICA AT WHICH SHEARER HAS BEEN THE LEADING SPEAKER. RALLIES HAVE BEEN HELD IN LUCEA, TRELAWNY, ST. CATHERINE AND, ONLY LAST MONDAY NIGHT, IN WEST KINGSTON. THE LATEST RALLY HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY A PARTISAN SOURCE AS " THE LARGEST POLITICAL RALLY SINCE THE ELECTION." ACCORDING TO OTHER PARTISAN SOURCES, THE RALLIES HAVE BEEN WELL ATTENDED AND THE JLP SUPPORTERS ENTHUSIASTIC. JLP/ BITU ORGANIZERS HAVE BEEN GRATIFIED AT THE TURNOUTS, DESCRIBING THEM AS THE " BEGINNING OF THE SWING OF THE PENDULUM BACK TO THE JLP."

4. THE PRINCIPAL REASON WHY THIS QUIET JLP ACTIVITY DID NOT COME TO THE EMBASSY' S NOTICE SOONER IS THAT IT RECEIVED NO REPEAT NO REPORTAGE IN THE LOCAL PRESS. ON INQUIRY, THE DAILY GLEANER POLITICAL REPORTER TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THE PAPER CONSIDERED THE RALLIES TO BE UNIMPORTANT, LOCAL CONSTITUENCY GET- TOGETHERS, THUS, NO COVERAGE. THIS, HOWEVER, CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH THE DETAILED COVERAGE GIVEN TO SEVERAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER' S RECENT RURAL SPEECHES IN WHICH HE EXPLAINED IN FAMILIAR TERMS THE GOVERNMENT' S POLICIES ON SUCH QUESTIONS AS INFLATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE PRINCIPAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS JLP ACTIVITY IS NOT IN THE PURPORTED SIZE OF THE CROWDS OR THAT IT INDICATES ANY IMPORTANT TREND AWAY FROM SUPPORT FOR THE PNP AND THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT. RATHER, IT INDICATES THAT THE OPPOSITION, ESPECIALLY SHEARER, HAVE BEEN MORE ACTIVE THAN IS COMMONLY BELIEVED IN KINGSTON. WHETHER THIS IS A RESULT OF PRESSURES BEING APPLIED TO SHEARER BY HIS SUPPORTERS IS QUESTIONABLE, BUT HE WAS CRITICIZED EARLIER IN THE YEAR  
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FOR HIS INACTIVITY.

DE ROULET

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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